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WINTER RAILS

ON THE MC CLOUD RIVER RAILROAD

Alco 2-6-2 No. 25, under steam again, will power a nostalgic rerun of the scenic Snowball Special over the spectacular Mt. Shasta route during Washington's Birthday Weekend, February 18 & 19, 1984.

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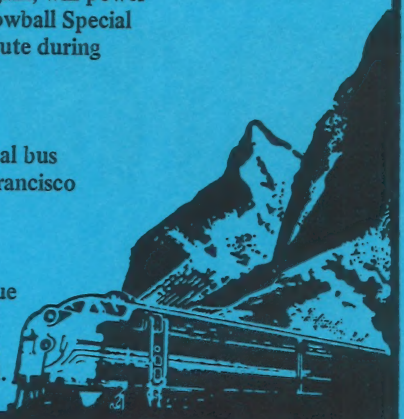

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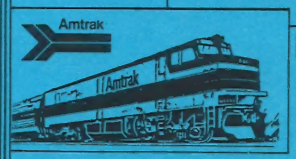

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ON THE COVER

Front cover drawing by Karen Arthurs.

Rear cover: The first AUTO TRAIN test run, with the test train seen at Deland, Florida, on Oct 8. The northbound train is making brake tests. Photo by Joseph L. Oates.

LETTERS

The only thing that would be worse than Amtrak's current mishmash of routes in Texas would be the arrangement suggested by Duane Roller in "How to restructure Texas trains" (RTN 279). Direct service to California via El Paso from Dallas and Ft. Worth is needed, but not by a wandering route thru Oklahoma, turning west at Ft. Worth or Dallas. It may be 88 miles closer from Texarkana to San Antonio via Palestine but it is 189 miles further from Texarkana to El Paso via San Antonio than it is via Dallas and Abilene, which would be of far greater significance.

If Mr. Roller wants to wring the EAGLE's neck, the quick way to do it is to take it out of Dallas, as this is where approximately 50% of the route's traffic is generated, not including the Chicago-St. Louis corridor, which is figured separately anyway. Trip after trip, as train 22 leaves Texas, half of the riders will have boarded at Dallas. As train 21 leaves Chicago, half of the thru riders will be destined for Dallas. It is difficult to see any point in saving 88 miles when half of the route's ridership is sacrificed, and the change would not place the train in any viable intra-state corridor. In fact, what little this is on the unmarketable and wandeing route between San Antonio and Dallas would be lost with nothing to replace it. Why not come up with something that will place the trains where the markets are and generate additional traffic? Further more, after spending $10 million of its own money to renovate and restore Dallas Union Station to one of the finest in the Amtrak system, there is not the least bit of interest in relegating this important hub to a dead-end status at the end of a stub operation.

A better answer is not difficult to arrive at: Operate the EAGLE on west from Dallas and Ft. Worth on Missouri Pacific (T&P) trackage via Abilene to El Paso, where it would connect with the SUNSET, providing the most direct route possible to the West Coast thru the two most populous areas of Texas.

Then operate the Oklahoma train down from Newton via Santa Fe lines to Ft. Worth and on to Dallas via MoPac, splitting at Dallas to proceed down both major legs of the Texas Triangle to Houston and to San Antonio, which would further penetrate highly populous and marketable areas. Subsequently, a segment should be added from Newton to La Junta and Denver via Santa Fe tracks which is the destination most requested from major cities in the West and Midwest where service is currently provided.

An upgrading of 30 miles of the MKT's Dallas-Waco line (Waxahachie toHillsboro) would be necessary to provide service on the west leg of the Triangle. Similar track renovations have been carried out to provide practical routes between Chicago and Detroit, and Chicago and Indianapolis.

Mr. Roller is correct when he states that Texas needs a major route of re-structuring; however, his proposal would be a disaster since he obviously has not accurately examined demographics and traffic patterns.

Burt C. Blanton
Dallas, Texas

I read with great interst "Riding the Mojave Limited" (RTN 279), as I personally saw the train, and it was history-making for this locale.

However, the Oct 22 "Mojave Limited" may not have been the "first revenue passenger train to cover the cutoff." It is my understanding that SP's cutoff played host to Union Pacific's CITY OF LOS ANGELES once.

As the story goes, UP's eastbound train 104 was traversing Cajon Pass, only a few hours out of Los Angeles, when a major derailment and pileup occurred ahead of it—somewhere between Summit and Barstow. The only practical thing to have been done was to back the CITY all the way to Colton, where an interchange was made with the SP, and it headed back to Cajon Pass over the cutoff on a long and circuitous trip to Barstow via Palmdale and Mojave.

While I have no way of confirming this, it was related to me by a reliable source, a Santa Fe towerman who was a close personal friend before his passing away. Can you imagine UP's famed E's and Astra-domes on the cutoff? Wow!

David D. Croteau
Rialto, California

It has become tiring of late to hear of all the barrages of complaints against Amtrak President Claytor. Alan Boyd presided over the "1979 Slaughter", yet he was continually praised by your publication. I cannot understand all the criticism against President Claytor. Since Amtrak's beginning in 1971, many have voiced the opinion that Amtrak lost out when it was forced to take the UP route thru Wyoming, since the Rio Grande decided not to join Amtrak. Claytor was able to re-route the former SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and all he gets is a lot of undeserving flack. I think he deserves the public's praise for reducing the subsidy needed for this train.

Secondly, he was able to have the dome cars added to the Heritage Fleet. No other Amtrak president was able to do this. Railfans for years attacked Amtrak for not including the dome cars in the Heritage Fleet program.

Thirdly, under Boyd, food service severely deteriorated, albeit by Congressional demand. However, Claytor has reversed this unfortunate trend. The new AUTO TRAIN service can also be added to the growing list of his accomplishments. Amtrak's basic service has not been cut under Claytor. As for the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, other 403(b) trains were lost under different Amtrak presidents. Remember the BAY STATE, the BLACK HAWK, the NIAGARA RAINBOW? Need I say more?

Thomas Worms
Chicago, Illinois

BOOKS

"The Life and Times of the Pacific Electric"—The World's Greatest Interurban, is the title of a new book published by the Orange Empire Railway Museum. This 48-page, 11 x 8½ softbound volume present numerous photos from the files of Pacific Electric, showing operations of the famed Red Car system mostly in the 1920s. . Explanatory captions accompany the photos. The book also contains a system map of the Pacific Electric and two feature articles reprinted from the company magazine of the 1920s. The Museum says they may offer more collections of photographs in the future if this book is well-received. It can be ordered from the Museum at PO Box 548, Perris CA 92370. Price is $7.95. (Add 85 cents for shipping and handling.)

"PCC from Coast to Coast", by Fred W. Schneider III and Stephen P. Carlson, has been published by Interurban Press. This magnificent 288-page volume (8½ x 11 in hard cover with color dust jacket) is a "pictorial tour of every streetcar system in North America that operated the modern, streamlined PCC car". It contains 619 photos as well as a great deal of text that tells where the cars ran, when and why. There's also a chapter on PCC operation overseas. In all, 33 railway systems are represented. In addition to PCC cars, there are PCC rapid transit cars, Brilliners, PCC work equipment and even a PCC trash truck. A detailed roster supplement in the back of the book covers an incredible 25,000 cars worldwide. With the currently increasing interest in streetcars , this book should see a wide audience. Streetcar lovers everywhere will find the book a delight. It's a great bargain at $36.95 (add $1.50 postage & handling, and appropriate sales tax in California). The publisher's address is PO Box 6444, Glendale CA 91205.

The Pacific Electric's Red Cars have always been of great interest to rail lovers, but now more than ever because of the pending reconstruction of the former Long Beach-L.A. route. "Red Car Days", just published by Interurban Press, and authored by Raphael Long, provides us with a superb look at the Pacific Electric days beginning in the 1940s.

All 102 photos in this collection were taken by the author, and they were published in a limited-edition album in 1966. The album quickly sold out and became a collector's item. The new book has been thoroly revised and it includes new material. The book contains such a suprising variety of scenes that it's hard to believe it is the work of just one person. The 64-page softback book sells for $11.95 (add 85 cents postage and handline, and tax in California. The publisher's address is PO Box 6444, Glendale CA 91205.

GULF COAST Is Okayed

The long-planned Mobile AL to New Orleans LA passenger train was approved by Amtrak's Board of Directors at their Nov 30 meeting in Washington. The train will be named the GULF COAST LIMITED (according to a Dec 8 Amtrak announcement) and operation will begin Apr 29, 1984, at the time of the spring schedule changes. The train will run for an experimental period, thru Sep 30, 1984. The World's Fair opens in New Orleans May 12, a fact which prompted the call for rail service. The 403-b train will be jointly funded by Amtrak and the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Intermediate stops will be at Pascagoula, Biloxi, Gulfport and Bay St. Louis, all in Mississippi, and it will run on Seaboard System Railroad tracks. Normal consist will be one diesel locomotive, two 84-seat Amcoaches, and a combined food-coach car. If business warrants, more cars will be used. The train will leave Mobile at 7am daily, and it will leave New Orleans at 6pm. Each state will pay $133,317 of the total $876,000 of operating and capital costs of the trial period. Current projected running time is 3 hours, 40 minutes. Track condition is reportedly excellent. There are plans for shuttle bus service from the New Orleans station to the fair grounds, five blocks away.

ST. PETERSBURG PLAN IS FINALIZED

At its Nov 30 meeting, the Amtrak Board of Directors approved a resolution to replace existing passenger trains between Tampa, Clearwater and St. Petersburg FL with dedicated bus service, and to extend the bus service to two beach locations, and Sarasota and Bradenton. The change will be effective Feb 1, 1984.

Amtrak said that the change, which was first proposed to the Board in March, will save rail passengers arriving or departing Clearwater and St. Pete up to 75 minutes by using a direct highway route rather than the long circuitous rail route between the three cities. Amtrak plans three express buses: one for Clearwater and Clearwater Beach; one for St. Pete and a St. Pete beach location; and a third for Sarasota and Bradenton. Amtrak said the change will save it about $1.3 million annually, improving the ratio of revenues to costs for the NY-Florida route

Amtrak also approved spending $1.5 million to build servicing facilities and make other improvements at Tampa in order to implement the service change. Amtrak will continue ticketing and baggage service at Clearwater and St. Pete stations, and the buses will arrive and depart from them. Notices will be posted along the route for 60 days starting Dec 1, Amtrak noted.

SILVER METEOR DERAILS NEAR OCALA

Amtrak train 98, the northbound Miami section of the SILVER METEOR, on Nov 30 struck a low-boy tractor-trailer truck that was carrying heavy road-work equipment at a crossing 15 miles north of Ocala FL, derailing the train and causing $85,000 in damage to Amtrak equipment and $7500 to the track. Two (out of 96) passengers and 11 Amtrak on-board service employees reported minor injuries, and were treated and released from local hospitals. Passengers were bused on to Jacksonville in two buses, with one of the buses also running to Fayetteville. At Jacksonville, passengers were transferred to train 82, the SILVER STAR. The wreck occurred at 2:45pm. Train 98 consisted of engine 379 and eight cars. The truck driver was not hurt. He flagged down the train, slowing it from 79 to 35mph in an 80mph zone. He was cited for illegal parking. His low-boy had become hung up on the rails. A similar accident occurred Aug 25 in Rowland NC to the same train.

NEWS BRIEFS: The CARDINAL might be rescheduled to leave NY westbound at 6:30am and lv Chicago eastbd about 8:30pm to make Western train connections; or it might be re-routed to serve Indianapolis. Amtrak surveyed the B&O Cottage Grove-Indianapolis line Nov 14 and found it okay, 99% welded rail. NARP will push for re-route at Dec 17 meeting in Terre Haute IN. Chessie might abandon present line thru Muncie.

RAIL CANADA

PASSENGER TRAIN RESTORATIONS on the North Shore line (Montreal-Lachute-Hull/Ottawa) and on the Montreal-Ste-Agathe-Mt-Laurier line (le Petit Train du Nord)have been asked by the Laurentian Regional Development Council in a communication to new Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy. The Quebec Mountaineering Federation supports the CRDL request.

NEW BI-LEVEL EQUIPMENT for VIA should ideally be in place for the Transpo '86 Exhibition, and a new Rail Canada Act should be in effect by then, said Transport 2000 Past President Harry Gow at the B.C. division meeting at the Vancouver CN station on Nov 3.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION, in continuing the Victoria-Courtenay service for five more years, said it will hold future hearings on improvements to the service which it would like to see made.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSIT is operating an elevated light rapid transit demonstration section at Main and Terminal in Vancouver. The 7/10-mile section of line is open Wednesdays thru Sundays and on holidays from 12 noon to 7pm. The free demonstration ride operates at speeds up to 45mph. BC Transit's demonstration project includes a display room with a working model of the system under construction.

CROW RATE LEGISLATION finally was passed in mid-November, increasing the amount that railways may charge for hauling grain. The legislation is named from the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement of 1897, which severely limited the railways' tariffs on grain, and which in recent years was causing large monetary losses—$200 million claimed for CP Rail in 1982. CP Rail immediately announced that it will proceed with more double-tracking, and with the new Connaught tunnel in British Columbia.

THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT has reduced fuel taxes for all buses in public transit and intercity transport from 40% to 20%, but on private automobiles down to 30%. Quebec Transport Minister Michel Clair announced that transit subsidies will not be reduced, the province preferring to pass on any saving to consumers. The Montreal Transport Commission (CTCUM) will pass on only half the saving, keeping the rest. The fuel tax reduction for buses was a suggestion of Transport 2000, thru Guy Chartrand as member of a study commission on the intercity bus industry. T-2000 President Guy Chartrand promptly condemned the CTCUM fare-hike proposal.

VIA RAIL WINS: VIA RDC car 6118 and a second car on Nov 5 beat a GMC van in a race from Moncton to Campbellton, in an event sponsored by a local radio station, CKCW. Both vehicles kept to their respective speed limits. The van reached Campbellton 20 minutes later than the 12:05 arrival of the train, which had followed its regular schedule, leaving Moncton at 8:25am, with stops at Newcastle and Bathurst. VIA wanted to publicizeits service, and Armand Doucet, mayor of Campbellton, who welcomed the train, wanted to attract shoppers and tourists to his town.

RAILWAY CARMEN'S UNION has exposed a plan by VIA to cut back the CANADIAN even further, from four thru cars Montreal-Toronto to two, from Feb 1984 on. The CANADIAN had eight cars as recently as October on the Montreal section. The Carmen, in a letter to the Transport Minister, protested the move, predicting the loss of 100 jobs at Glen Yard, Montreal.

VIA RAIL CANADA President Pierre Franche wrote to VIA employees Nov 2 outlining cost problems in on-board service and station service functions. To reduce

the costs of these, VIA is pressing the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Transport & General Workers to "change voluntarily" before "others do it for us."The cost of operating a dining car on the Eastern Transcon service is $253,400 per month, VIA said, while revenues amount to only $46,000.

OTTAWA-TORONTO TRAINS were back in operation Nov 16, VIA said, after two months' of replacement by buses due to track improvement work between Smiths Falls and Brockville.

$1.5 MILLION SALE of ex-CP mini-cruiser "Princess Patricia" to an unidentified buyer has fallen thru.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

NEW ORLEANS CENTRAL business district should be linked to the eastern part of the city by a modern streetcar line, city councilman Wayne Babovich announced Dec 1. The city has just had a $50,000 preliminary study completed, and Babovich and other rail supporters want to move into a more detailed study next year. In the preliminary proposal, stretcars or commuter trains would run along Chef Menteur Highway, on the ex-L&N tracks and on Seaboard rails to Press Street near the Mississippi River.

SINGAPORE TRANSIT SYSTEM is taking bids on rolling stock, and among the eight bidders is a Canadian consortium that includes Bombardier Inc., of Montreal.

METRO-NORTH COMMUTER train in the Bronx was hit at 7:40am Dec 9 by a crane which toppled over. The crane operator was injured, pinned in the wreckage for two hours, but there were no reported injuries on the train, the 7:26am run from North White Plains, carrying about 450 passengers. The Harlem line was tied up for about an hour, as was the New Haven, which also uses the tracks at that location, south of Woodlawn station.

PORTLAND, OREGON TRI-MET system will have track construction complete, and trolley wire up (with power on) on two miles of its 15-mile Gresham light rail line by February, transit officials said recently. Testing of the first of the line's 34 new Bombardier cars will begin then. Completed track will extend from Burnside St. and 197th to the Gresham terminal area. Rollout of the first car at Bombardier's Vermont plant will occur during the holiday season. Meanwhile, major work is being done on the Banfield Freeway to widen highway lanes, and to provide a right of way for the light rail cars north of the highway and immediately south of the UP main line (Amtrak's PIONEER route). Construction will begin in 1984 on track-laying in the Lloyd Center area and on the Steel Bridge over the Willamette River. The bridge will be closed to highway traffic during construction. Community leaders seem closer to consensus on a light rail line to the southwest suburbs, using a proposed tunnel thru the hills west of the downtown area.. A revived Oregon City line also is under consideration, but would not follow exactly the old Portland Traction line.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION in the San Francisco area, transit pursestring holders, on Dec 1 named seven transit projects it is interested in finding financing for. They are: BART extension from Daly City to S.F. Airport; San Jose's Guadalupe Corridor light rail line; extension of S.F. Muni streetcar line from Embarcadero to SP station and extension of J-Church streetcar line to BART Balboa Park station; BART extension from Concord to North Concord; BART extension from Fremont to Warm Springs; people mover from BART Coliseum station to Oakland Airport (provided airport business improves). Rejected were proposed Caltrain extension to East Bay Terminal in S.F., extension of BART to Pittsburg and Antioch, light rail line in San Ramon Valley, and Santa Clara County rail network. After January public hearings, MTC will make final decisions on projects to support.

SAN FRANCISCO CABLE CARS may be running ahead of the scheduled June 1984 return date—as early as March, due to fast progress on the rehabilitation schedule.....

New England Metro

A HOLIDAY TRIP

BY ANTHONY PERL

The Thanksgiving rush comes early to New England, where students from innumerable colleges and universities head home any time from a week to a day before their turkey festivities. As the vast majority of these students are car-free while away from home, the impact of their exodus is quickly felt at the airports, train stations and bus depots from Bangor to New Haven. The center of this migration emanates from Boston, where over 200,000 students pursue their higher education. Boston and southern New England should provide an ideal market for Amtrak at Thanksgiving, at the same time as they present a formidable logistical challenge.

To evaluate just how well Amtrak can serve this market and its ability to handle peak loads of passengers, I decided to travel in the eye of the hurricane this year, from Boston to New York on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and returning on "Black Sunday," traditionally Amtrak's busiest single day. Going down, I traveled in unreserved coach, and my return was accomplished on the "infamous" New England Metroliner.

South Station was unexpectedly quiet when I arrived to catch train 175, the MINUTE MAN. Bus on closer inspection, a large crowd appeared to be waiting along the outside concourse, taking advantage of the unseasonable 60-degree sunshine. A mental note checked me from joining the crowd right away. First, I circled back into the station for a can of soda to supplement my take-aboard luncheon. A 12:59pm departure left my appetite impatient with the possible vagaries of Amcafe service hours. As I was paying for my beverage, a full 15 minutes before scheduled departure, the first boarding call was made for No. 175. Out on the platform, **every** door on each of the 14 Amcoaches was open and in use. This turned the usual boarding free-for-all into a far more civilized process. It was very encouraging to observe the noticeable effort of Amtrak employees to board a crowd of around 400 people as quickly, smoothly, and efficiently as possible. Conductors assisted passengers with their luggage, lifting pieces into the vestibule and carrying them right to the luggage racks in some cases. Presiding over this virtually flawless departure was Mr. Peter Welch, Amtrak's highly competent New England director of passenger services, who is never above getting out onto the platforms and into the action.

Our on-time departure, with over 400 passengers settled in, was the dividend of this efficiency. However, it was soon apparent that the on-board crews were not up to this standard. No introductory announcements were ever made; the only information that a passenger got was the calling of a stop about three minutes before the train got there. Perhaps passengers in the airline age expect to be overly coddled, but it would hardly be asking too much for a simple welcome, list of train stops, and on-board food service at the start of a trip. Many unfamiliar passengers were left to guess on their own and repeatedly question the train crew, which only made them more annoyed. A nearby passenger who walked forward to find the Amcafe was intercepted by a conductor and told to return to his seat. When questioned about the food service, a conductor responded, "It'll open when it'll open; we'll make an announcement."

By Route 128, every available seat had been filled. Two of our 14 cars were Amfleet II "thru" cars for passengers traveling the length of the Corridor—a dubious luxury on a train that would carry standees. Just before Providence, our Amcafe attendant announced that he was (finally) opening. After seeing the mob of half-starved passengers run forward to attackthe food, I was glad to have both brought my own food and not waited to buy a drink on board.

As the train cruised down the Connecticut coast at 100mph, my thoughts turned to the many trips I had made to and from Boston since my arrival there in 1980.

This period had seen many changes in the different travel options available, and their relative merits. I had sampled most of these choices, traveling in vehicles ranging from a World Airways DC-10 to a 1977 Honda Civic. 1980 and 1981 were bad years for Amtrak in New England. The peak trackwork, and its attendant delays, coupled with the start of the discount airlines, combined to change many passengers' preference from the train to the plane.

My Thanksgiving trip home by train in 1980 had taken over seven hours, with our train breaking down somewhere east of New Haven. I remember vividly sitting in a black-out, motionless and unheated Amcoach on a bitterly cold night for over an hour until a Conrail freight engine could drag us slowly into New Haven. The worst part of the trip in those days was the Hell Gate Bridge route, where 20mph speeds were the rule. Long stops in front of the MTA tower at Shell Interlocking (where the line to Grand Central branched off) and the LIRR's Harold Tower, which controlled the entrance to the East River tunnels, were also to be expected. But with Amtrak trains averaging anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes late, it was no wonder that the dispatchers in these busy commuter zones gave them last priority.

At the same time, the cost of a one-way air ticket had dropped as low as $9.99, as much as $20 below the Amtrak fare. Even with the difficulties and delays associated with using the airports in Boston and New York, the plane was still 3-5 hours faster than Amtrak, and when it cost half as much, passengers headed for New York Air, People's Express and their ilk in droves. Who did ride the train in those dark days? Well, an air ticket from Providence to New York cost almost as much as a New York to San Francisco flight during the height of the fare wars. The only provlem was that there was only a limited number of people in Providence or New London who needed to get to New York or vice versa.

The turning point of this Amtrak slump was not dramatic. Perhaps it started when a World Airways jumbo jet from New York skidded off the end of an icy runway into Boston harbor one night in 1981. Suddenly the airfare bargains became a bit less attractive, especially during Boston's severe winters. Around the same time, Amtrak began to rebuild its on-time performance in the Corridor with little fanfare. Just as Amtrak's operations were again reaching a point of respectability, the New England Metroliners arrived. Launched with a combination of speed and service amenities not seen on any non-electric U.S. passenger train in years, these Metroliners made a favorable impression on their inaugural run. While these trains have not been an overwhelming success yet, they signaled that Amtrak was back in business between New York and Boston, and was there to stay.

As we eased to a stop in New Haven, the loss of "hotel power" for lights, etc., during our engine change, jolted me out of my reflections and back into a very crowded train. In the semi-darkness, people hunted for seats with moderate success. I spied our Connecticut Valley connection on the adjacent track. It was a

pair of battered Amtrak RDCs no doubt resurrected to pinch-hit for ailing SPV-2000s. I pitied the passengers who had come down from Hartford and Springfield on these relics and who would now have to stand at least until Stamford.

The run to New York was both uneventful and punctual this time—the best kind. As we approached the mouth of the East River tunnels, I could see the trains at the Long Island Rail Road's Hunterspoint Avenue station on our left. Their trains appeared well-filled with commuters headed home for their holiday, and my last sight before plunging underground was of a bar car filled with people using the opportunity to begin their holiday early.

This trip to New York had been on time and pleasant, overall the best choice on a day full of overcrowded airports and highways. With the exception of about five percent standees, Amtrak had little trouble in carrying this load of passengers home to their Thanksgiving.

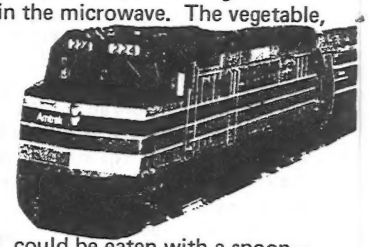
★★★

Pennsylvania Station, New York, is an unattractive place to wait for a train, at best. The beauty of holding a reserved Metroliner ticket is that one can spend as little time as possible in the station and still be guaranteed a seat on the train. After walking a block from the PATH terminal at 33rd Street, I paused just long enough to note the 10-person deep lines besieging the ticket windows and the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd penned up in the waiting room. It was difficult to slice my way thru this crowd towards the East gate of Track 9; this is where the effective use of a suitcase as one's "linebacker" becomes invaluable.

Awaiting below were five gleaming Amfleet II cars—four coaches and one cafe-lounge. Just as I was trying to board, two frantic passengers rushed off in search of the 5pm Metroliner to Washington. Amtrak's trademark has become so ingrained in the minds of many as a New York to Washington express, that these two had just heard the word "Metroliner" and had boarded the wrong train.

This was my third trip aboard the New England Metroliner, the last one having been one year ago to the day. I couldn't help making comparisons between today's train and its counterpart of last year, and in everything except timekeeping this year's train had slipped. Last year there had been two diner-lounges and a crew of eight to handle the crowd; now we had just one non-revenue car with a staff of five to care for 220 hungry and thirsty passengers. The hot hors d'oeuvres and at-seat beverage service were still popular, but the crew was having trouble keeping up with demand. By New Haven, some passengers were still waiting to be served for the first time.

Dinner in the diner had slipped the most since last year. Two seatings of 32 seats each insured a full house each time, and the crew had a bit of trouble keeping up. A fruit cocktail was waiting at each place upon arrival. While the crew came and took orders promptly, the rush precluded the use of a menu, the transaction being completed after a nod by the waiter in one's direction and a brusque recitation of the entrees. One attendant explained the situation as follows: "We had 200 reservations on the train manifest, so we expected about 150 people would show up. Instead we got 220 people and nobody was prepared for it." The food was also hardly prepared for serving. A chicken breast came scalding hot at the center with almost raw skin, indicating a rushed heating in the microwave. The vegetable,



broccoli, could be eaten with a spoon—also the victim of rapid overheating. At the end of the meal, several checks were confused since no menu/checks were used at the start.

All in all, the enthusiasm and smiles of last year's crew were gone. This year's Metroliner had fallen victim to a lack of interest on the part of its employees, who acted publicly disappointed that so many people had shown up to ride their train. This led me to wonder how many of my fellow passengers would be on an Amtrak train a year from now, and whether the New England Metroliners would even be there to serve them. Both trips had shown that Amtrak is now generally capable of handling large numbers of passengers without cracking under the strain. It remains to be seen whether the company will be able to offer anything to attract passengers in other than ultra-peak periods. Conventional service from New York to Boston now offers comfort and reliability, but not end point to end point speed or low enough price to attract patronage. The Metroliner offers the same as the conventional service with the addition of a reserved seat and a minuscule amount of personal service. Neither combination will be enough to bring passengers out of the air and off the roads in any large numbers, except when they are jammed past their capacity. Hopefully, Amtrak will soon use their present abilities to expand into a true competitor in New England.

THE BIG A GETS AN F — ALMOST

BY DANA M. DAWES

Since we were to stay about two miles west of the Anaheim Stadium, locally known as the Big A, we decided to ride the SAN DIEGAN to the new Anaheim station rather than detraining at Fullerton as we had in the past. On this first day of Standard time, Amtrak train 586 left Los Angeles late thru Mission Tower with the usual backwards-forwards move. We arrived four minutes late at a darkened Anaheim stop as the conductor cautioned "Warch your step on those stairs."

Had it not been for the Amtrak agent, who illuminated the area with his car lights, we would have stepped into total darkness. Using our trusty flashlight, we called the local taxi, inquiring whether their driver could find the station. Thirty minutes later, a follow-up call brought the response that they knew where the station was but could not figure out how to reach it thru the Stadium grounds. A cab finally came wandering thru the darkened parking lot and arrived in response to our flashlight signal.

A daylight reconnaisance revealed an Amtrak sign marking the access thru the Stadium employees' entrance off East Katella Avenue. An unmarked left turn led to the station about ¼-mile south at the east edge of the vast lot. Finding an exit to go west on Katella was another challenge. A "Right Turn Only" sign at the employees' gate takes one east, away from nearby Disneyland.

We drove around the vast Big A parking lot and out the marked exit to State College Blvd, where a left turn took us westbound on Katella. The Amtrak agent, still in the trailer beside the locked station, informed us that our $5 parking ticket for lot entry during an event would be refunded on his validation. Phone requests to Anaheim and Stadium offices for a less complicated route brought no reply.

If this situation has not been resolved, best bring a compass and a signal flare when you detrain at Anaheim!

What's Doing at Beech Grove

The Oct 24 Amtrak equipment roster shows some interesting things:

(1) E8 engines 495 and 497 leased to Metro-North.

(2) Thirty-seven SDP40F engines are shown on the roster.

(3) E60 engines 958, 959, 960, 967, 971, 972 all leased to New Jersey DOT.

(4) The last three Army baggage-dorms (1409, 1418, 1425) are being converted to HEP.

(5) Six more 11-bedroom sleepers will be all ex-UP "Star" series cars, 2230-35.

(6) None of the ex-DZ 10-6 sleepers 2670-78 have been converted to HEP yet.

(7) Ex-DRGW flattop coaches 1120 & 1121 are renumbered 4840 & 4841.

(8) Ex-DRGW dome coaches 1106, 1107 & 1108 are renumbered 9446-8.

(9) Seventeen "A" list legrest coaches remain stored, all possible candidates for HEP (six SP, nine CB&Q, and two DRGW).

(10) Diners going to HEP are 8380, 8381, 8383, 8384, 8026, DRGW 1115; their new numbers will be 8521, 8522, 8524, 8525, 8529 and 8530 respectively.

(11) Car 8601 (ex-UP 5505, ex-Amtrak 4565 & 4609) will be a table car.

(12) Car 8603 (ex-UP 5532, ex-Amtrak 4572 & 4610) will be a table car also.

(13) Car 8702 (ex-PC 7143, ex-Amtrak 3321) will be a buffet car.

(14) Car 8703 (ex-PC 7139, ex-Amtrak 3320) will be a buffet car.

(15) Car 8704 (ex-CB&Q 340, ex-Amtrak 3920) will be a buffet car.

(16) The ex-GN great dome lounges are numbered 9300-9302 (ex-GN 1391, 1392, 1395; ex-Amtrak 9361, 9362, 9365 respectively).

CORRECTION: The following cars were omitted from the article, "New Amtrak Car Sale" last issue: Dining cars 8027, 8300, 8301, 8302, 8320, 8322, 8324 and twin unit diners 8806-8807 were left off the XXX list in error. These cars, in addition to the ex-ATSF Hi-level diners mentioned in the article, are being held at Beech Grove.

How the E&N Was Saved

BY IAN EHN & JIM RUSSELL

"It's another five for doughty E&N" headlined the Victoria Times & Colonist when a three-man panel of investigators from the Canadian Transport Commission ordered continuation of the ex-CP Rail Budd car service on Vancouver Island October 8. The review panel ordered the Victoria-Courtenay RDC runs continued "on-the-spot" after a 45-minute deliberation at the conclusion of a number of hearings on the island.

The extension is for five full years.

"There are no ifs, ands, and buts about that decision," said John Magee, chairman of the panel. CTC observers reported to Victoria newsmen that a "bench decision" on a railway case is considered "unusual."

The 97-year-old run has been the target of CP Rail and VIA Rail Canada "train-off" intentions for many years, and often is considered a long and beleaguering "cause celebre", if not a morality play of sorts, fueled by intense public dislike of the CP system on Vancouver Island.

The 150-mile route originally was intended to connect to CP's transcontinental main line via a series of five long bridges over the tide races north of Campbell River. Enormous grants of public lands on Vancouver Island were made to CP and its predecessor rail lines with a covenant that service would continue "in perpetuity" on the system. Plans to extend the line 30 miles north from Courtenay to Campbell River, site of large pulp and wood products mills, were dropped after World War I.

In the series of hearings ended Oct 8, CP Rail did not submit witnesses, preferring to "maintain a watching brief" and not present evidence. VIA Rail witnesses did present some lukewarm evidence for maintenance of the service, at least until the provincially-owned Pacific Coach Lines which competes with the rail service, is returned to private ownership.

Technically, the proceedings were a 5-year "review" of the E&N passenger service, mandated by the 1978 decision of the CTC extending the runs. However, Deputy Constitutional Affairs Minister from British Columbia Mel Smith questioned even the need for the "review" on the grounds that the application to end the run no longer was valid as CP Rail no longer is responsible for the service, and because VIA Rail had not submitted a formal abandonment application.

VICTORIA
NANAIMO-COURTENAY

VIA's costs, and CP's bill arrangements, came under sharp criticism. In a stinging editorial, the Victoria Times & Colonist, one of the E&N's staunchest supporters, hit hard at the costing/billing situation. For example, Stewart Penketh, VIA's director of costing research, testified that VIA pays CP to run the E&N service, but has no way of determining if VIA is receiving its money's worth. The costing agreement is totally confidential, and not even Members of Parliament are allowed to see the agreement's terms. Thus there is no way to challenge CP's bill for $1 million annually for operations and $215,000 annually for maintenance of the two RDC cars, which CP claims it rebuilt two years ago for $1.4 million.

Particularly galling to the Times & Colonist editorial writers were refusals of CP to produce witnesses at the hearings, and thus give island rail backers an opportunity to produce costing data thru cross-examination. The newspaper called for CTC board members to order CP to produce witnesses ready to answer questions about the costing contracts.

(Above:) Current operation of the E&N Dayliner is with a double set of RDC cars, nicely refurbished and repainted in VIA colors—natural stainless steel body with blue trim and yellow car ends. This photo (by RTN) shows the train at Victoria. (Below:) The pre-VIA Dayliner—a single RDC in CP paint. Photo taken at Nanaimo by Gene Hines.

Meanwhile, the embattled but unbeaten RDCs continue to leave Victoria daily at 8:15am and to return at 5:15pm.

Victoria city officials are now mulling proposals that the passenger run be extended from its current Esquimalt terminal back across the Johnston Street bridge (spanning the Inner Harbour) to a terminal in the downtown area. The old terminal at Cormorant & Stores Streets (about three long blocks from the Bay department store) was torn down in the mid-1970s to allow widening of highway approaches to the bridge.

National implications of the E&N proceeding revolve around VIA's costing contracts. VIA cost witness Penketh told the CTC that VIA did not analyze CP's bills for repairs to the RDCs. He said VIA is billed for 21 man-hours per day for maintaining the cars in the Victoria area, which observers, including the newspapers, feel is far too high.

Rail employee John Cooper, who led citizens' groups in the bid to save the E&N service in 1977 and 1978, since has become a Victoria city alderman, due in part to his high, photogenic and populist profile. Cooper said that VIA had acted as mid-wife during its 1978 takeover of the E&N runs, but had delivered a still-born.

Victoria's bouncy Mayor Peter Pollen, often active in the E&N issue, told CTC members that they had to "wind it up and make it go."

★★★

With the Vancouver Island train slated to continue running for at least five more years, now is a good time to plan a trip on this delightful train for the next travel season.

The VIA timetable tells one next to nothing about the train. It has no name

in the timetable, and indeed goes by several names. The E&N Dayliner is of course named for the Esquimalt (pronounced es-KY-malt) and Nanaimo (nah-NY-moe) Railway, which now belongs to Canadian Pacific. Bill Coo's "Scenic Rail Guide to Western Canada" (a book which any train traveler in Canada should use) calls Vancouver Island's only passenger train the MALAHAT DAYLINER, after Malahat, the highest point on the line. The trains are VIA numbers 198 and 199.

On a recent trip, Editor Jim Russell found the run a most scenic and pleasant ride. The Dayliners are comfortable and smooth on the very curvy railroad.

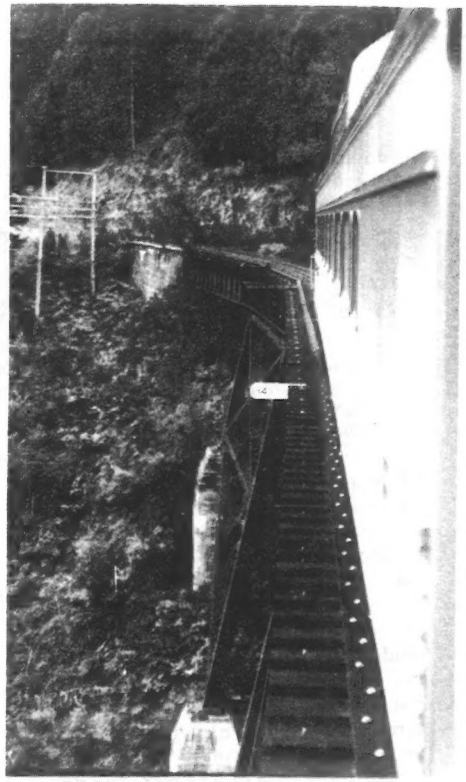
We rode the southern half of the route, boarding at Nanaimo after a ferry run from Vancouver. Nanaimo comes from an Indian word meaning "big strong tribe." Esquimalt means "place of gradually shoaling [becoming shallow] water."

Train 198 left Nanaimo at precisely 3pm, after arriving at 2:50 and letting on five passengers. A snack truck meets the train here, as no food is carried aboard.

Wild flowers abound in the thick forests that the train penetrates. At 4:38 we reached a beautiful lake which evidently was Shawnigan Lake. At 4:40 we crossed a high trestle at very slow speed. Looking down, one sees a deep and narrow chasm with a rapidly cascading stream pouring down into the lake. Two minutes later there was another trestle.

At exactly 5pm, 15mins early, we reached the end of the line and grudgingly detrained. Unable to forget the enchanting route, we delved into history texts of the area. It seems that Robert Dunsmuir, coal baron, was the primary force behind the building of the railway. When the railway opened in August, 1886, Dunsmuir and Sir John A. MacDonald rode an inaugural train. When the train stopped at what is now Duncan (then Alderlea), 2000 people were gathered, and asked Dunsmuir to give them a station. As the train pulled out, the history book records, Dunsmuir shouted to them, "You will have a station here, boys!" Incidentally, no location on the island is named for Dunsmuir (Bill Coo's book errs on this matter). The Dunsmuir Islands were named for his son, Hon. James Dunsmuir, Premier and Leiutenant Governor of British Columbia, and presumably the town of Dunsmuir is likewise so named.

We are delighted to know that the train will continue to run, and we urge train travelers to ride it.



The Dayliner crosses a trestle over one of many thickly-wooded canyons. Paul Rayton photo.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Over the years I have spent much time in Milan's 360-yard long terminal with its 22 passenger platforms that sprawls along Piazzele Duca d'Aosta.

"Even at that early hour [6:45am] the station, largest and busiest of the 11 in Milan, jumped with noise, motion and excitement. Voices spoke in Italian, French, German, Swiss dialects, Yugoslavian, Scandinavian, Japanese, Arabic and English. It sounded as if the students at Milan's 21 foreign-language institutes had been dismissed simultaneously."

—Walter Hackett in Los Angeles Times, Dec 4.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"There is a new uniform toll-free number nationwide for Amtrak reservations and information: 1-800-RAIL. (Not to be confused with PTJ's new number: 1-312-957-RAIL.)"

—Passenger Train Journal, November.

(There won't be any confusion; PTJ's number has more digits.)

"Sebastopol and Stockton, railroad authorities say, are the only two cities in America still featuring trains running through downtown streets."

—George Snyder in San Francisco Chronicle, Nov 25.

(It's just that the other cities don't list street-running as a civic feature.)

Consumer Comments on Amtrak Schedules

BY GLENN LEE

Amtrak's Graham Claytor has been in the saddle long enough for some dramatic changes to be made in the national passenger train system. The revived CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR routing thru Colorado is one major positive change, as is the renewed AUTO TRAIN service from Virginia to Florida.

Scheduling is just as important as routing to develop train revenues. Scheduling and routing together are like adjusting a camera for distance and light. You can't have one without the other. It's time to go over some of the drawbacks in Amtrak scheduling.

CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR SYSTEM

The entire CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR schedule is "out of focus." The eastbound schedule for all components should be 75 minutes later than at present from Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles on the West thru to Chicago on the East. The westbound schedule is also out of focus, and should be 90 minutes later than at present at all points on the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, PIONEER and DESERT WIND routes.

PIONEER: The 6:45am departure from Seattle effectively discontinues the PIONEER for 75 per cent of the patrons using the PIONEER southbound from Seattle for short-distance and intermediate-distance travel. When the PIONEER was inaugurated in 1977, the 7:10am departure from Seattle was held to be a heavy drawback to development of patronage, both for the long-distance route to Boise and Salt Lake City, as well as for the Seattle-Portland "corridor"-type patronage. The 8am departure was a good one, and still is in effect for the northbound run from Portland to Seattle as the MT. RAINIER.

A new schedule 75mins later would make departure from Portland 12noon, and Boise, the most important intermediate stop on the route between Portland and Salt Lake, at 11:45pm. The PIONEER's eastbound arrival at Salt Lake City would be 7:30am rather than 6:15am, which again would held develop traffic to Salt Lake.

Westbound, the PIONEER should leave Salt Lake at 11:35pm rather than 10:05pm. Departure from Boise, now at 5:35am, would be 7:05am. It is important to serve Boise at "good" times. Former Senator Frank Church, who campaigned for inauguration of the PIONEER since formation of Amtrak, said at the 1977 inaugural run that without the Boise stop the PIONEER could not exist. Church made those remarks in the context of his wife's behind-the-scenes moves to prevent Union Pacific from tearing up the Orchard Line, the Boise-Orchard section of the Boise cutoff, without which the PIONEER could not serve Boise.

Northbound departure of the PIONEER from Portland should be 5:30pm, the approximate former time, rather than the 4pm departure now in effect. The 4pm departure is too early for corridor travel to Seattle, and also is too close to the COAST STARLIGHT's northbound departure from Portland at 2:25pm for Seattle. The STARLIGHT easily can run 90 to 120 minutes late (and sometimes more), and when that happens, the PIONEER and the STARLIGHT can leave Portland within minutes of one another for Seattle.

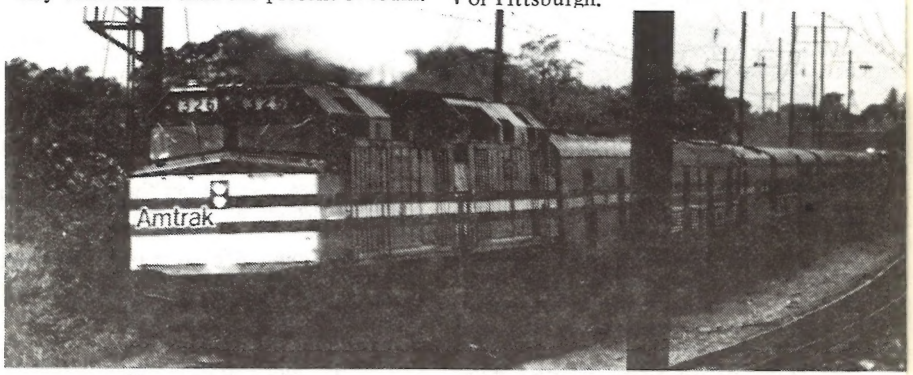
DESERT WIND: This is another Amtrak run which depends on an intermediate stop between Salt Lake and the Coast for much of its business—at Las Vegas. With the new CZ schedule, the westbound DESERT WIND departs Las Vegas for Los Angeles at 6:20am. With the proposed runs westbound set back 90 minutes, that time would become 7:50am—a much better time at the gambling capital, and arrival in Los Angeles would be 2:55pm. If a few

minutes were shaved from the total westbound running time, and the 2:50pm SAN DIEGAN departure set back to 3pm or 3:10pm, a direction connection could be maintained for the SAN DIEGAN at Los Angeles UPT.

Eastbound, the DESERT WIND should leave Los Angeles at 3:05pm rather than the present 1:50pm, and should depart Las Vegas at 10pm rather than 8:45pm and arrive at Salt Lake 7:20am rather than 6:05am.

CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR west of Salt Lake City: Present westbound departure from Salt Lake City is 10:20pm, and that would be changed to 11:30pm, with Reno departure now at 7:50am moved to 9:20 am. This is important as it allows just about all passengers but the most sleepy-eyed to be awake for the train's westbound approach to Donner Pass. Arrival in Oakland would be 4:20pm (still in daylight even on the shortest day of the year)rather than the present 2:50pm.

Eastbound, some 75 minutes later than at present, CZ would depart Oakland 12:40 pm, and Reno at 7:15pm, arriving Salt Lake City 7am rather than the present 5:45am.



The author suggests a new schedule for the BROADWAY LIMITED, seen here speeding thru Pennsylvania. Photo by Paul Rayton.

CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR east of Salt Lake City: Fortunately, schedule adjustments to make the CA-PIONEER-DESERT WIND more saleable at intermediate points west of Salt Lake City will not affect saleability of the schedule at points east of Salt Lake.

The Chicago departure would be 90mins later at 3:40pm, 10mins later than CZ's "historic" departure from the Windy City. Omaha arrival would be 12midnight, and Denver arrival 8:30am rather than 7am as at present. Salt Lake arrival would be 11:15pm rather than 9:45pm. This would allow Amtrak to inaugurate a Denver-Glenwood Springs daily roundtrip as a recreation corridor run in advance of the CZ operating on the existing schedule, lv Denver 7:30am, ar Glenwood 1pm; returning lv Glenwood 4pm, ar Denver 9:40pm. This short-haul train could carry Heritage dome cars, and handle short-haul tourist business avoiding the possibilities of delay now inherent in the present CZ operation, as well as preventing overcrowding and turnaways on the long-haul run in the Denver-Glenwood "recreation corridor."

Eastbound, the new CZ schedule would lv Salt Lake 7:55am, Glenwood Springs 4:15pm, Denver 10:35pm, Lincoln 7:15am, Omaha 8:25am (a much better time for the day-run to Chicago), with arrival in Chicago at 5:05pm.

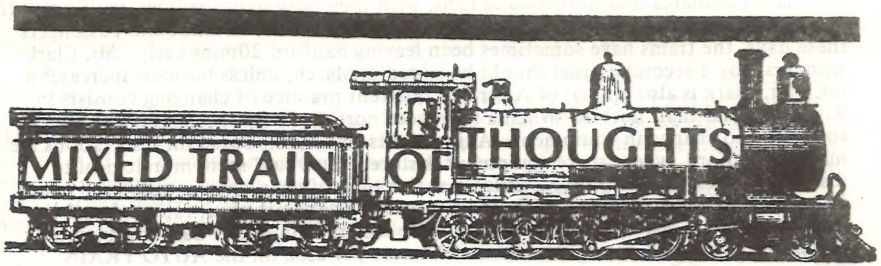
BROADWAY LIMITED

The present BROADWAY LIMITED schedule was inaugurated when there were several trains per day each way over the Pennsylvania route between New York and Chicago. Evan as late as 1964, there were five daily trains, with the BROADWAY aimed at those traveling between the end points. Today, with only one train on the west leg of the route, more attention should be paid to the intermediate point of Pittsburgh.

I propose that the eastbound BROADWAY run at least four hours later than the existing schedule, departing Chicago 8:50pm rather than 4:50pm, allowing good connections from the eastbound CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. Pittsburgh, now served from 3:33am to 4:03am eastbound, would be served instead from 7:33am to 8:03am, and passengers would have a daylight run eastbound from Pittsburgh on both the BROADWAY and the CAPITOL LIMITED, which is combined with the BROADWAY west of Pittsburgh both ways.

Arrival at Philadelphia would be 3:23 pm, and New York at 5:19pm.

(continued on page 20)



DENVER-GLENWOOD SPRINGS leg of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR route got a 15% fare increase on Dec 1, by far the highest percentage-wise rise in the recent boost that was to average about 4% for the country. (Next highest was San Francisco-Reno leg of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, which got 10%. Third highest was Denver-Salt Lake City, with 6%, and the Chicago-Valparaiso route likewise. Most of the system had no increases at all. 403-b trains got 4% increases, and multi-ride fares were boosted 6% if they were below the standard commuter fare level, whatever that means.) Amtrak said that it was raising fares on the Rio Grande line because the D&RGW's fares had been much higher than the ones Amtrak replace them with. Supposedly the fares are still lower than the D&RGW's even with the increases.

It seems to us that something inconsistent is happening here. Amtrak is making a big deal out of its increased patronage of the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, most of which is coming from short-haul riders on the Denver-Glenwood Springs segment. Because they are short-haul, they don't contribute all that much to Amtrak revenues. (Amtrak ridership was up 33.4% in October on the CZ, by far the largest long-distance increase; we'll have the complete ridership data next issue.) Amtrak uses this limited increase (limited because it's mainly short-haul Denver-Glenwood) to justify having robbed Wyoming of its passenger service. But Amtrak is boxed in with little room for ridership growth on that short leg. RTN has learned that the contract Amtrak signed with D&RGW prohibits Amtrak from setting out any passenger cars at Glenwood Springs, thus making it impossible to run special trains on that leg, or even to add cars to the CZ which would be dropped off at Glenwood. Thus the only way it build revenues on that leg is to raise fares. It looks as if both Amtrak and the public got shafted on that one, and the railroad got the best of the deal. And why the discriminatory 10% increase on the San Francisco-Reno leg? That's the next largest patronage section of the CZ, and the route over which negotiations for another train have been starting with Nevada and Caltrans.....

★★★

COLORADO MIDLAND RAILWAY said at the end of November that the company would have to be dissolved unless it found an investor within a week. A sum of $40,000 was all that was holding it back. Reportedly the company's board of directors, 15 persons, had already seen four resign and the rest vote to dissolve unless more funds were forthcoming. Said Jim Jordan, head of the company that it trying to restore rail passenger service to Wyoming, "Being very realistic, if we go under, you're not going to see passenger rail service in Wyoming for a long time to come".....

AUTO TRAIN OPERATIONS are proceeding very nicely, according to reports, but patronage has fallen off some since early December. Southbound train 53 was a record three hours late into Sanford on Dec 1, and it carried L&N engine 4069 on the point, ahead of P30s 724 and 705, indicating some engine trouble. The next northbound train left Sanford with three P30s, but this was the only use of three engines since early November, reports Robert Clark. The Orlando Sentinel reported an interview with Amtrak's Marketing VP William S. Norman Dec 2, who said that business on the AUTO TRAIN was "very, very, very close to our projections." However, he said he didn't have any specific data on patronage, but noted that 200-300 people traveled southbound per trip in November. Robert Clark calculates that these figures are an underestimate, because the number of auto carriers used during that time varied from 12 to 23 (except for 8 on Thanksgiving Day), and they were full upon arrival in Sanford. Therefore, 200-300 is closer to the number of autos transported, and the number of passengers would be roughly twice that number. Norman said that Amtrak was aiming for 55% capacity ridership. At this time of the year, southbound runs are much more highly patronized than northbound.

Mr. Clark calculates that northbound runs, with their very light loadings, would pull the overall average down to about 33% of capacity. With so few northbound passengers these days, the trains have sometimes been leaving Sanford 20mins early. Mr. Clark wonders why a second consist should be added in March, unless business increases a lot. Mr. Clark is also critical of Amtrak's apparent practice of changing consists in Sanford rather than Lorton. When a train goes northbound, it always returns to Sanford with no change in equipment. Adjustments to consists based on reservations are made in Sanford, where spare equipment is stored. It would seem morelogical to make consist changes in Lorton, at least at this time of year when southbound travel is heavier, so adjustments could be made up to the very last hour, rather than 24 hours or more in advance. A number of spare cars remain idle at Sanford, including one dome coach and one Amfleet II coach never yet used on the AUTO TRAIN.

The table at right (from data collected by Mr. Clark) shows the number of passenger cars and auto carriers on each southbound train in recent days Nov 24 (Thanksgiving Day) was a record short consist. The 10 passenger cars included one table car, one buffet, one lounge, one dome coach, two Amfleet II coaches and four sleepers. There were five tri-level and three bi-level auto carriers, and two P30 engines. The train arrived at 7:20am at the Sanford platform.....

Date	Cars	Carriers	Total
11/17	17	19	36
11/19	16	12	28
11/21	16	16	32
11/24	10	8	18
11/26	14	11	25
11/28	18	22	40
12/1	18	23	41
12/3	18	15	33
12/5	15	14	29
12/8	14	13	27
12/8 north	14	10	24
	170	163	333
Daily avg	15.5	14.8	30.3

NEW YORK-MONTREAL high-speed train agreement between Quebec and the states of New York and Vermont was signed in July, RTN readers will recall. On Nov 25 the New York DOT announced that it had contracted with a research team (Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company) for a $200,000 study of market demand for the train. The Vermont DOT will also participate in the study. The Province of Quebec is to do surveys at four border crossings. Study results are expected out by mid-1984.....

★★★

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES for October show a small 3.4% increase systemwide over Oct 1982. NE Corridor was up 2.8%, short distance up 4.5%, and long distance down 0.8%. We'll have complete data next issue.....

ALL-ABOARD AMERICA fares are not affected by the Amtrak fare increase of Dec 1. (Incidentally, Amtrak announced the increase one day in advance, on Nov 30.) The present All-Aboard fares, $175 in one region, $225 in two, and $299 for the whole system, are being offered thru next Feb 29, and tickets will be good thru Mar 31—but they are not good in the Dec 16-Jan 3 period.....

LIFE SAVER EXPRESS was a special Amtrak train operated Hartford CT-Boston on Dec 1. The governors of the three states, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, participated to call attention to Operation Life Saver Week, Dec 4-10, during which railroad crossing safety would be emphasized and publicized.....

★★★

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING held in Washington Nov 30 was reported as very quiet and without acrimony (something unusual these days). The Board approved a $13.2 million program to perform a major redevelopment of Penn Station in New York City. The program will require 2½ years, and will result in a "virtually brand new passenger facility as modern and well-equipped as any passenger terminal in the nation." Waiting room capacity will be increased from 400 to 1,000 seats; a new Metroliner lounge and restrooms will be built; elevators and escalators will be rebuilt; all levels and facilities will be made handicapped-accessible; and ticketing and baggage-handling operations for passengers will be improved. Amtrak said the most visible improvement will be the relocation of the ticketing counters from the middle of the station to the west wall. This will create a wide-open concourse taking passengers past new food courts and retail shops. The rehabilitation will also cut Amtrak's annual costs there and will increase its commercial revenues by up to $3.5 million per year, the rail corporation said. Other actions taken by the Amtrak Board are reported on page 5.....

GRANBY, COLORADO STATION will have a small Amtrak trailer facility installed. Funds for this were approved by Amtrak's Board on Nov 30.....

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 was an interesting day in the Bay Area. Our correspondent Ted Scull arrived here from New York, traveling thru the Panama Canal on the way. A great wind and rainstorm blew him in under the Golden Gate, and our electric power was out all day. Ted left Oakland that night on the northbound COAST STARLIGHT, which was running 3½ hours late due to SP 40mph speed limit north of San Luis Obispo because of winds which were blowing trees and debris across the tracks. Then the train had to detour between Sacramento and Klamath Falls on the Western Pacific's Feather River Canyon route because of an SP freight derailment near Red Bluff. The train reached Sacramento at 4:18am Sunday morning (due in 11:22pm Saturday night) and was delayed another hour there adding an SP engine. It left Klamath Falls at 6:10pm Sunday night, after a presumably daylight run thru the Feather River Canyon, and reached Portland, Ted's destination, at 1:34am Monday (due in at 2:25pm Sunday). Final Seattle arrival was at 5:35am. We'll let Ted tell the rest. His column will appear again next issue.....

★★★

THE EAGLE DERAILMENT of Nov 12—more details (see RTN 279). The number of overturned cars was three, counting from the rear of the train, a coach, the diner, and a second coach. The four dead passengers and most of the injured were in the two coaches that oveturned—two dead in each of the coaches. The next car was another coach,a nd it was leaning sharply to the right. Ahead of it were five more cars that did not derail: lounge, sleeper, coach, sleeper, baggage car. Reader Stephen Condit informs us that the derailment occurred in a 65mph zone. Reports indicate that the track that gave way, causing the derailment, was a section that had been replaced earlier that day by the work crew that was still at the scene. There is an unconfirmed report that a 17 or 18-foot section of continuous welded rail had been cut out due to damage, and replaced by another section that was either rewelded or attached with bolts. The question remains as to why no slow order was in effect at that location.....

THE SUNSET LIMITED that left Los Angeles on Dec 4 derailed three cars near the El Paso TX station the next day. The passengers were bused on, but the train was readily re-railed. The train reached New Orleans the next day only 1½ hours late, while the buses were 7½ hours late. Consist of the SUNSET was engines 723 & 704; cars 1169, 39912, 32057, 38006, 34071, 34096, 34046, 39971, and 32033.....

SOUTHBOUND NORTH STAR was in a grade crossing accident at 7:30pm on Dec 2 near Foxboro, Wisconsin, about 20 miles south of Superior. A pickup truck with three people and carrying a snowmobile struck the side of the train's engine. Two occupants of the truck were killed, and the third was severely injured. There were no injuries on the train, and passengers said they felt no impact. The engine was severed from the cars, and passengers were bused on.....

SANTA CLAUS ARRIVED, as he does annually, in Picayune MS on Amtrak train 19 on Dec 5. A crowd of about 200 was on hand to greet him.....

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA STATION cannot yet be used because of "some structural problems with the roof" said Amtrak's Graham Claytor in a letter to a reader on Dec 5.....

SAN DIEGO'S CITY COUNCIL passed a resolution last month opposing the proposed Bullet Train.....

NEW YORK TIMES writer and railroad enthusiast Edward C. Burks died at his home in Manassas VA the morning of Dec 11, at the age of 62.....

STEAM ENGINE 4449's proposed excursion to the New Orleans World's Fair in 1984 is to follow this schedule: leave Portland OR May 5, to be on display at Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, El Paso, San Antonio, Houston and Dallas, with arrival in New Orleans Jun 2. It will leave New Orleans Jun 9, arriving back in Portland on Jun 24. The Sacramento display will be a benefit for the state railroad museum. The museum is getting a new wing.....

CONSTRUCTION MAY START before Jan 1 on a new double-track bridge across the Willamette River in North Portland OR on BN's main line used by the COAST STARLIGHT, PIONEER and MOUNT RAINIER. The new bridge will be a lift span, replacing an antique swing model with limited horizontal clearance, which has been a target for ships. Little disruption in train traffic is expected, and an alternate UP route exists, which requires backtracking to or from Portland Union Station.....

NARP REGION XII annual meeting will be held Feb 4 at the San Franciscan Hotel (near BART Civic JCenter station) 12:30pm to 4pm.....

AMERICAN HIGH SPEED RAIL announced Nov 28 that it plans to use the SP rather than the Santa Fe line in southeastern Los Angeles County for its Bullet Train line, and will have a station at Norwalk, the only stop between L.A. and Anaheim. Assembly Transportation Committee Chairman Bruce Young, who lives in Norwalk, had lobbied heavily for the stop there.....

THE GREYHOUND STRIKE was reportedly nearing settlement early in December.....

MOST DANGEROUS PRODUCTS list prepared by the Consumer Federation of America and announced Dec 8 carries the automobile at the top of the list.....

AMTRAK HAS CONTRACTED with Budd for construction of car body shells for three prototype passenger cars, two sleepers and one diner, at a cost of $2.75 million, Amtrak said in Nov.....

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS: Last issue, on page 15, the sentence beginning near the end of line five should have read: "A small section of track had been replaced by the crew."

News in this issue is updated thru December 12, 1983.

SCHEDULE COMMENTS (continued from page 16)

Westbound, the BROADWAY should be one hour earlier, in order to give better times at Pittsburgh—lv New York 1:15pm, serving Pittsburgh 10:10pm-10:40pm rather than 11:10-11:40pm as at present. Chicago arrival would be 7:51, giving better connections with some morning departures from Chicago, such as the 8:50am STATE HOUSE departure to St. Louis—a connection now missed by one minute. This connection should be deemed important following demise of the NATIONAL LIMITED, the last train offering thru service between St. Louis and East Coast points.

EMPIRE BUILDER

Moves should be made immediately to re-route the EMPIRE BUILDER from the Spokane-Wenatchee-Seattle ex-GN line to the ex-NP line from Pasco thru Yakima, Ellensburg and East Auburn (bus connection 18 miles to downtown Tacoma) to Seattle.

One recent report showed Amtrak has been doing $100,000 yearly in ticket sales for daily service at Wenatchee, the only major point on the line between Spokane and Seattle. By contrast, when ticket prices were lower, and when EMPIRE BUILDER service was only tri-weekly, Yakima alone on the old line did $270,000 in ticket sales per year.

Running time is only one hour longer via Pasco, which serves the Tri-Cities area with 125,000 population. BN has filed an application with the FRA to remove block signals on the Yakima line, and has suspended all service over Stampede Pass. The line is open now only to a point three miles west of Ellensburg from the east; and to Kanaskat from the west. There is some speculation that if the block signals are removed, the line will be abandoned, as BN now proposes to abandon the ex-GN main line west of Newport WA.

Amtrak would immediately increase its revenues by rerouting thru Pasco, and the line would be saved from being torn up. Amtrak one year ago added one full hour to the COAST STARLIGHT to serve Chico and Marysville CA, and also downtown Sacramento; and recently has added 3-4 hours to the Portland-Chicago PIONEER running time by rerouting the SFZ-now CZ run from Wyoming to Colorado's D&RGW line. Those two schedule-lengthening precedents should be cited in support of rerouting of the EMPIRE BUILDER via Yakima.

FLORIDA SERVICE

The Florida service often is "tight" because of cutbacks engineered by the Carter Administration. They included reduction of New York-Florida service from three daily trains to two, with the discontinued run basically being the CHAMPION.

One low-cost method of increasing capacity to Florida would be extension of the PALMETTO, now a NY-Savannah GA run, to Miami. The 817-mile PALMETTO would go another 550 miles to Miami, arriving in Miami southbound about 9:30 am, and leaving Miami northbound about 8pm. This would make the PALMETTO a "market" train for Miami, allowing residents at many points north of Miami the opportunity to go "to town" for a day of shopping, sightseeing, and to check in with doctor-dentist-lawyer-broker, etc., without requiring an overnight hotel bill.

In addition to giving more NY-Miami capacity, a whole new market, not now served by Amtrak, could be tapped. For the existing NY-Savannah run, the increase in revenue would be higher than the increase in costs, and could help to finance the extra 550-mile-per-day round trip. It would help kill two birds with one stone. There is no reason why Amtrak should not thus attempt to maximize revenues with an operation that already is funded.

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CARS & CONSISTS

*CRESCENT, train 19, Picayune MS Nov 28: engines SR 3964 (on at Monroe VA), Atk 257 & 255; cars 1210, 1627, 2459, 4636, 4733, 4649, 4019, 8515. Engine 257 failed; train 2¼ hours late.

*CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, train 59, New Orleans Nov 29: engines GM&O 702, Atk 262; cars 1247, 2932, 28009, 4639, dome 9400, 4631, 4638, 4625, 4734. Engine 702 on at Carbondale, passengers bused on. Engine still in excellent-condition red & white GM&O paint.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Nov 24: engines 231, 240, 284; cars 1168, 1139, 39920, 31001, 31039, 34098, 34051, 34039, 39942, 33004, 38033, 32031, 32053 (100+ passengers on at San Jose). Same, Nov 26: engines 286, 233; cars 1162, 1230, 39913, 31004, 31085, 34049, 33021, 38014, 32069, 32000, 34056, 39964, 34028, 31037, SP 117 "Tucson." Train very busy.

*Yale-Harvard Football Special, New Haven-Boston Nov 19: engine 213; cars 21148, 20046, 21152, 21258.

*BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, train 190, New Haven Nov 20: engines two F40's back to back, numbers unknown; cars 8 Amfleet cars numbers unknown, slpr 2988 "Pine Dale", 3222 "Palm Beach", "Manatee River", CSC 10 (Chessie) "West Virginia". Last four cars held special group from Cleveland who viewed the Yale-Harvard game. This was the 100th anniversary game, and car CSC 10 sported a special drumhead to mark the occasion. Cars were in New Haven Union Station on track 9. Amtrak engine 205 provided HEP during 2-night layover. (Bob Underwood.)

RAIL FANTRIPS

Dec 27-30: Holidays in Canada. Lv Kalamazoo MI 1:54pm, ar Toronto 9:50 Dec 27. Train to Montreal, ar 7:30am Dec 28. Attend Nutcracker ballet & play. Tour Montreal. Back 4:25 pm Dec 30. $265 up. America by Rail, 16168 Center Rd, E. Lansing MI 48823. 339-8854.

Jan 7-15: American Southeast by Rail tour. Lv MichiganJan 7 on WOLVERINE to Chicago, CAPITOL LTD, SILVER STAR, visit Walt Disney World; SILVER METEOR to Charleston; PALMETTO, CAP LTD, WOLVERINE. $785 up. America by Rail (ADDRESS ABOVE).

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													1
													2
													3
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